

RICE UNIVERSITY

Terminal Project: Intermodal Passenger Terminal for San Antonio, Texas
Uncertain Ground

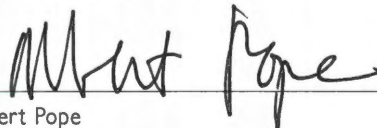
by
Kerry C. Whitehead

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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Approved by the Thesis Committee:



Michael Bell, Director
Associate Professor of Architecture



Albert Pope
Associate Professor of Architecture



Gordon Wittenberg
Professor of Architecture

Houston, Texas
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ABSTRACT

Terminal Project: Intermodal Passenger Terminal for San Antonio
Uncertain Ground

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Kerry C. Whitehead

The site acquired by the city is 14 acres of industrial rail corridor where nothing is developing or growing except for the weeds. The proposal for a new transportation terminal on such a site led to a hyper-real investigation of architecture among the blooming ruins typical of the contemporary city. Avoiding the assertion of form, rather intervening provisionally to provide a new public surface is presented. The architecture is modest in effort to unearth new territory in the construction of the city.

STREET GEOMETRY IN DOWNTOWN SAN ANTONIO



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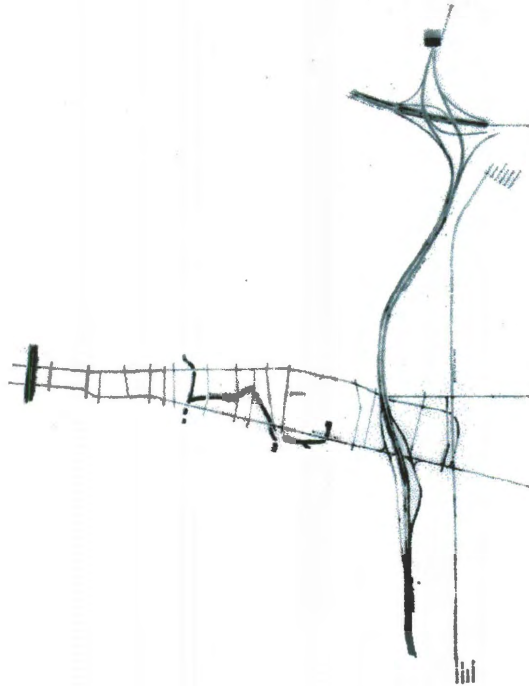
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STREET GEOMETRY IN DOWNTOWN SAN ANTONIO

REMOVED FROM THEIR CONTEXT, THE STREETS, RIVER, AND RAIL INSCRIBE TOPOGRAPHY, FORM, TECHNOLOGY, ECONOMICS, POLITICS, AND HISTORY. AN ABSTRACT MAP OF INFRASTRUCTURE DESCRIBES THOSE PATHS OF LEAST RESISTANCE. IS THERE A NEW NOLLI MAP AS SIMPLE AND COMPLEX AS THE ORIGINAL VERSION THAT DESCRIBES AN AMERICAN CITY QUITE DISTANT FROM 18TH C. ROME? DOES NOLLI'S UNMATCHED TECHNIQUE, NOW 250 YEARS OLD, TESTIFY TO NEW URBAN COMPLEXITY WHICH RESISTS THE SIMPLICITY OF FIGURE AND VOID?

PREFACE

In June, 1928, twenty select architects representing eight countries in Europe convened in Switzerland in the Gothic chapel of La Sarraz Castle. Later known as the group CIAM, this first meeting took to task the following issues:

1. Modern Technology and its consequences
2. Standardization
3. Economy
4. Urbanism
5. Education
6. Realization: Architecture and the State

Among the group, Hugo Haering, armed with his own pre-judgments of 'new building' inspired by issues not directly engaged with architecture form and aesthetics, challenged CIAM; in essence he disagreed with Le Corbusier's tenets of ideal geometry, Cartesian method and his five points canon. He saw the group promoting the imposition of geometrical order upon nature and upon the spontaneous and unpredictable manifestations of human society.

In April, 1997, Rice University hosted the Second Paul Kennon Memorial Symposium, *Architecture After Individualism*. Several individuals, including students, from around the country and the world convened in Houston, Texas (and incidentally, the MFAH, Brown Auditorium by Mies Van der Rohe, an architect intimately connected to the previously mentioned proceedings). The topics:

1. Liberty
2. Corporate Firms
3. Capital and new geometry
4. Changing Economies
5. Public Infrastructure and Community
6. Signature and Identity
7. Place of Work; between free-markets and the State
8. Object of Architecture; the individual, a collective or the object itself

Despite the diverse range of positions among the participants, in a range from absolute *verbal animism* (where words, existence and their mutual operations are fused inseparably) to *verbal alienation* (where signifier and signified do not exist in the same universe), the symposium's participants sided closer to verbal alienation. In fact, many made certain that the universes of rhetoric (intellect) and building were held separate... "a built curvy line will not save the world," warned one of the participants pondering the formalization of his research. The underlying devotion to alienation seemed to undermine a critical assessment of where architecture resides after individualism in the case by case delivery of unique research and projects.

It seems ridiculous to compare the two events. Admittedly, the symposium did not deploy tactics and terminology akin to a revolution (*in most cases*) as did the manifesto at La Sarraz, but it did continue the 'old' debates that surfaced during the critical years of modernism's momentum in the mid 1920s. The connections are tenuous and probably incredibly naive, yet, when I think of the new shapes proposed in Greg Lynn and Karl Chu's research, I am inspired to ask the same basic things that Hugo Haering did of Le Corbusier. *How does the clarity of abstract geometry take shape on the land?* While modernism confronted the geometry of new technology, materials, modulation, and efficient production, contemporary avant-garde seem obsessed with patterns in the city that replace subjectivity with transparency, patterns so inaccessible we can no longer constitute ourselves as subjects of power, knowledge, and history. Economics, politics, and other city animators are bigger than anything recognizably human. But why this means we can no longer build beautifully human buildings in which to live and work, I cannot figure?

You must confine yourself to saying old things—
and all the same it must be something new.
Ludwig Wittgenstein

'The World is Not Yet Quite Ready'

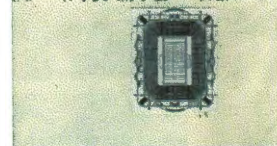
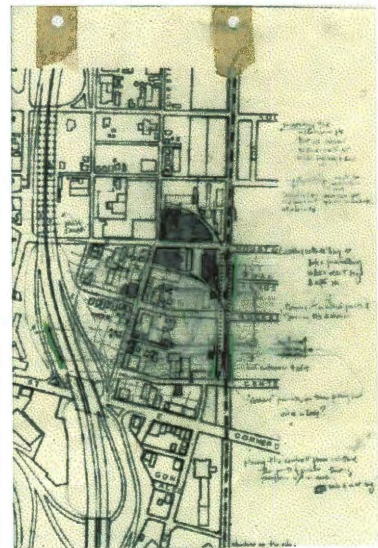
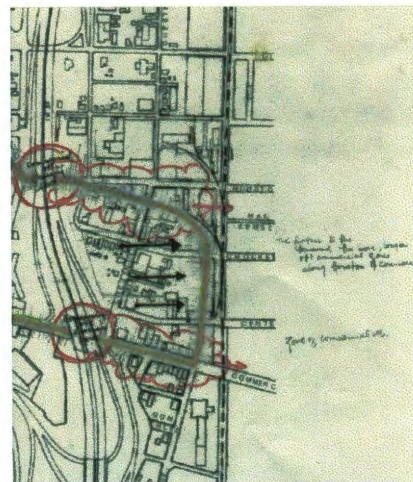
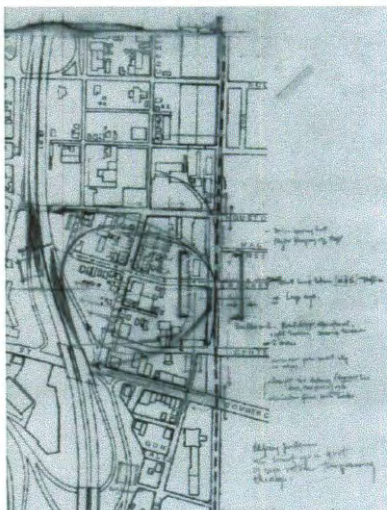
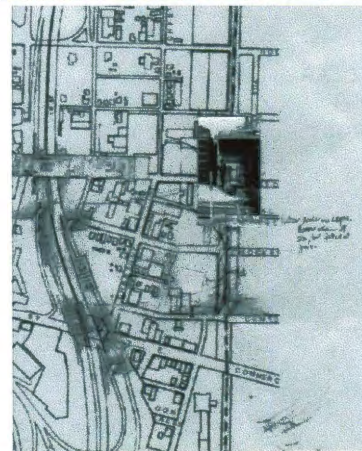
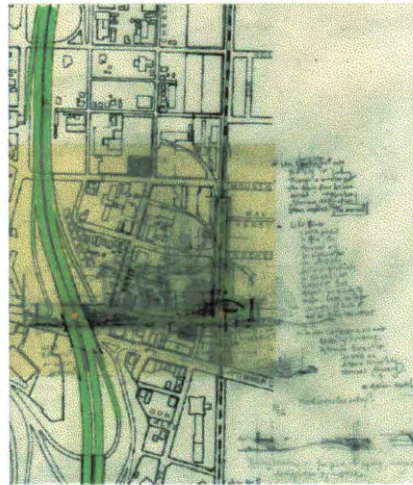
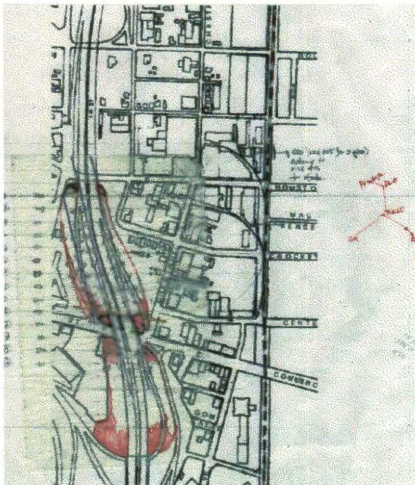
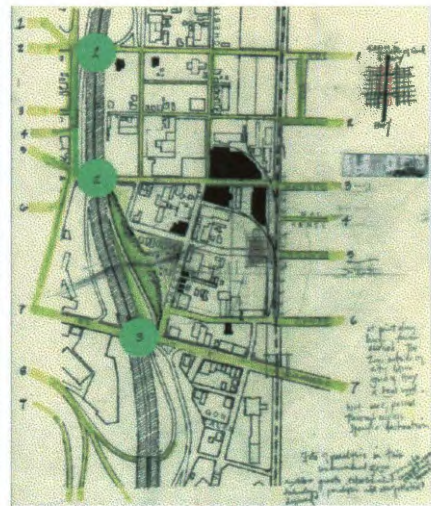
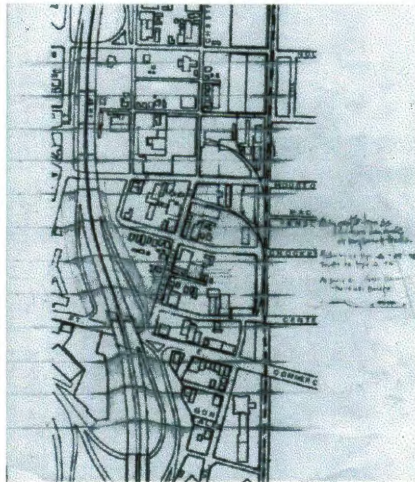
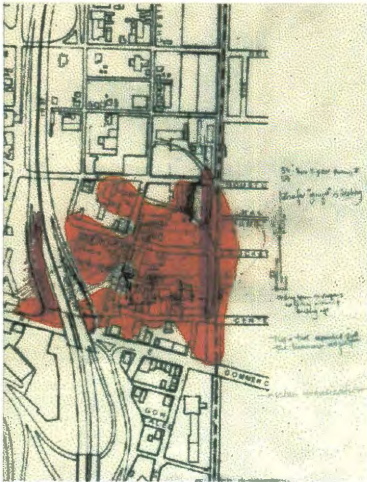
Hugo Haering, title to article appearing in 1940

Perhaps the relevance of Hearing writing an article in response to the first CIAM gathering (20 years later) is confirmed by the topics chosen during the recent Rice symposium and my comment (70 years later).

Whether or not the world is ready for abstract influences of technology, economy and politics to directly shape its cities, places of work, and homes, *if indeed they do not already*, or architecture is a generation behind other urban animators and is studying up to catch up, or architecture is desperately trying to redefine its subjective limits while clinging to its practical art and fine art origins remains debatable. As an architect struggling to experiment on the side of verbal animation, ultimately it is unimportant as rhetoric alone. Which brings me to the topic of my design thesis.

My design thesis is an experiment and the premise for my (re)search is simple: architecture is essentially a coalescing of labor, capital, pure tectonic, and art; the opportunity for complicity with political and economic forces is varied and multiple. I start with an old problem and an actual proposal for the city of San Antonio, my hometown. Experimenting, daringly experimenting, means editing, adjusting, and reducing the pieces that I make until there is almost no 'Architecture' left. In my project, infrastructure constitutes most of the *built* program and is considered carefully. The architecture is modest. Not building a figure contrived to bear the place's meaning allows an architecture emptiness to resound without sound thus filling the site with the potential to be full in its absence, a grander gesture than any form I could possibly give to the site. Experimenting means understanding other urban animators productive in the city before knowing my own sources of animation as an architect.

One consequence of trying to experiment and engineer everything within "a possible system" is that so much is left unfinished. Yet, this open-endedness is the most appealing quality in the project presented. Inserting a framework rather than a neatly framed project in the middle of the city suggests a moment of possibility rather than stability, vision rather than closure. The necessary square footage, programmatic support, and functional requirements are included in the building, but what is missing are the autonomous moves in design that make architecture the definitive move, the hermetic seal, literal and physical, against the city.



EARLY SKETCHES OF SITE AND PROGRAM :
GEOMETRY, TOPOGRAPHY, CIRCULATION, ORDER, FORM, MATERIAL, SPEED, MASS,
ORIENTATION, HERMETICS, FOUNDATION AND TYPOLOGY (RE)SEARCH DIAGRAMS

*TERMINAL PROJECT:
INTERMODAL PASSENGER TERMINAL FOR SAN ANTONIO, TX*



*TERMINAL SITE IN SAN ANTONIO
BLOOMING RUINS*

The site acquired by the city is 14 acres of an industrial rail corridor where nothing is developing or growing except for the weeds.

The program calls for an intermodal terminal - a collision of several transport infrastructures. Intermodalism is a new concept of transportation that relates all modes of transportation — local, intercity, private and public — to a central point.

The project is a proposal for the city of San Antonio. It is the city's attempt to stay competitive in attracting tourists and conventioners to the city. The terminal must sustain the city's vitality, yet avoid the deadening autonomy of other large urban constructions — convention centers, covered stadiums, urban malls, headquarter hotels — massive forms of massive presence.

Led by an initial image of hollowing out a field, which the place and task provoked, this new urban ground has become the vehicle for relating the terminal to the city. In essence, a person arriving into the center of the city, where one expects a certain density, is now confronted with a fallow field.

The expansive field and the restricted paths of the terminal's infrastructure reflect the paradoxical nature of transportation under the guise of efficiency — a hurry up and wait reality of layovers, connections, ticket purchasing lines, and driving up and down parking lanes to find close spots. The infrastructure weaves through the field and is ordered to enhance the feeling of the various orders converging at the site: rail, bus and automobile; private and public; local and global; function and intervention; frivolity and necessity; path and field.

UNCERTAIN GROUND



FIELD (SOMEWHERE) BETWEEN SAN ANTONIO AND
HOUSTON ON INTERSTATE 10.

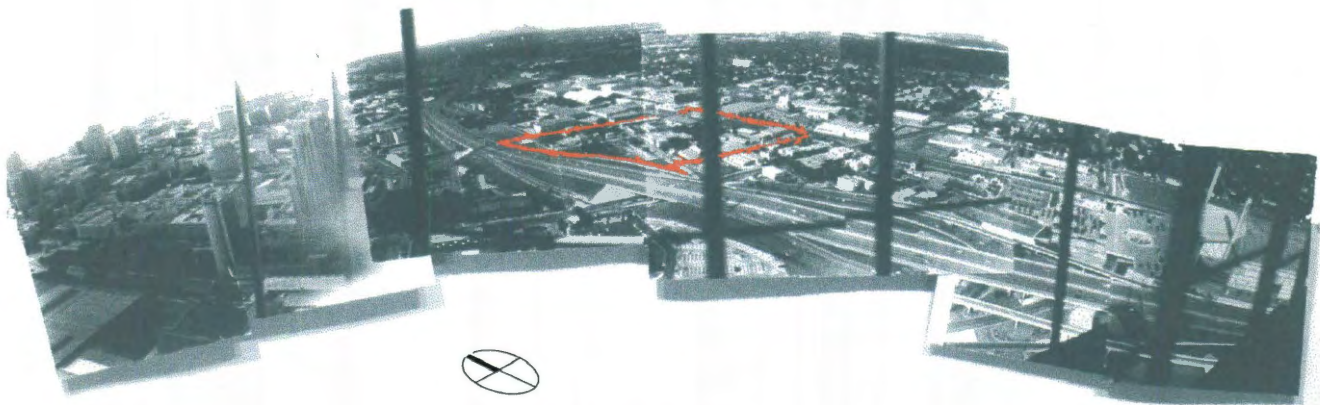
In this thesis there seems to be an alternation between two themes:

Genius Loci invoked in order to read the topos of the city...the gestalt of the urban landscape as well as its inherent nature which must be excavated and unearthed

New geometry which seems to resist resisting the productive forces at work in contemporary building practices

The question remains *how does the clarity of geometry take shape on the land?*

Usually it is not a very clear translation. For example, the freeway, a product of efficient production and engineering, when taken to the land, incorporates an overwhelming critique of political and class conflict into the history of highway making — highway as a wall that separates two groups of people, or as a gentrification instrument that disperses neighborhood communities understood as bad real-estate in the city.



AREA WITHIN ORANGE = 14 ACRES

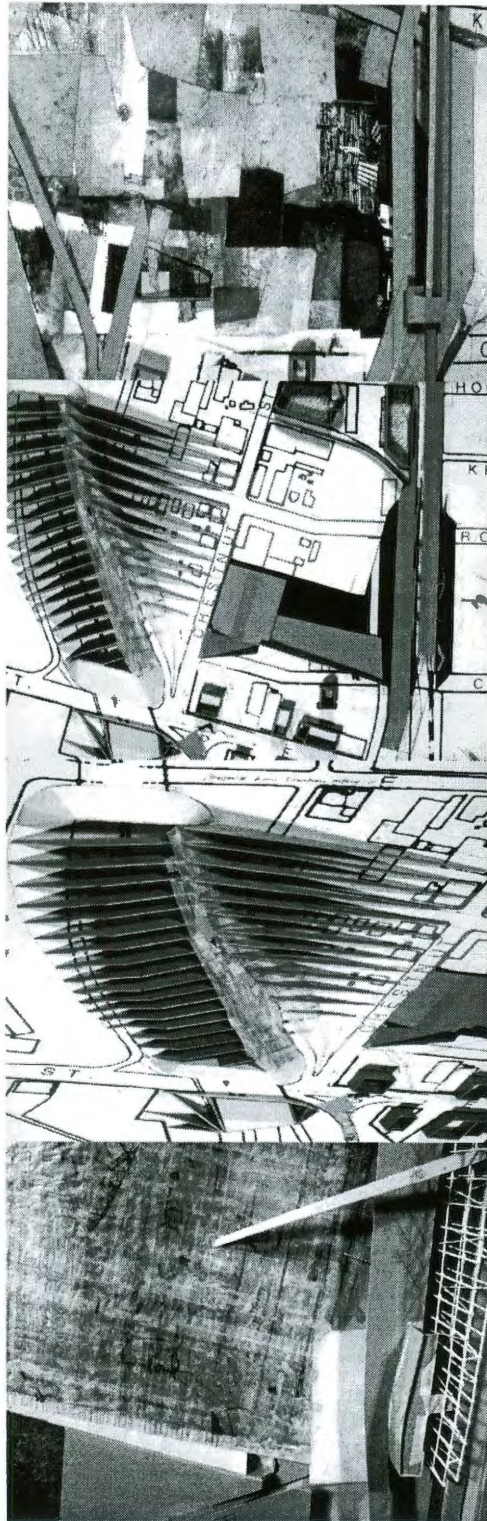
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF TERMINAL SITE (OUTLINED IN ORANGE)

NEITHER A FIELD WITH OBJECTS NOR DENSELY BUILT WITH HOLES, IT IS A KIND OF NO MAN'S LAND STRANGELY IN-BETWEEN. I WOULD CHARACTERIZE IT AS A BLOOMING RUIN, WEEDS AND VINES THE ONLY ACTIVITY CHANGING THE PLACE. A CURIOUS SCALAR RECIPROCITY BLURS THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE ARTIFICIAL AND NATURAL. SCATTERED AMONG THE MESS OF RAILROAD INDUSTRIES AND INFRASTRUCTURES, CURRENTLY ABANDONED OR REUSED FOR STORAGE PURPOSES, ARE PARTS OF AN OLD EAST SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD, COMPOSED OF PREDOMINANTLY BLACK AND LOW INCOME RESIDENTS. THE MASSIVE EARTH BERM OF INTERSTATE 37 ON THE SITE'S EASTERN EDGE TOOK OVER ANY DIRECT PHYSICAL CONNECTIONS THE EAST SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD HAD WITH DOWNTOWN. NATURE IS RECLAIMING THIS ONCE THRIVING AREA OF INDUSTRIAL AND RAIL INDUSTRIES THAT ARE NOW INACTIVE; BUT PEOPLE STILL LIVE HERE.

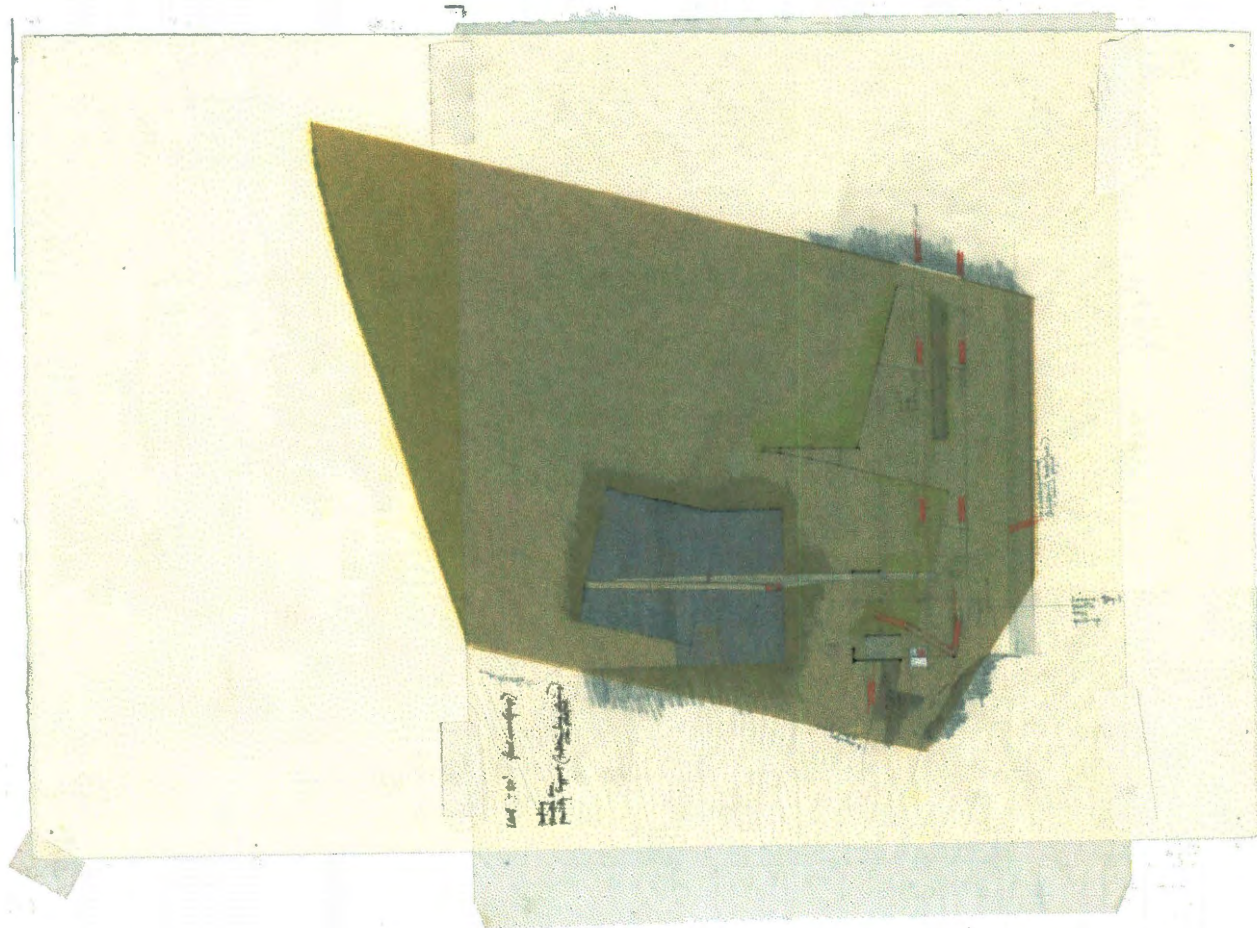


SITE MODEL

BETWEEN RAIL AND HIGHWAY, THE PROPOSED FALLOW FIELD EXTENDS THE CONTINUOUS EAST - WEST SLOPE OF THE EXISTING HIGHWAY BERM TO AND BELOW THE RAIL LINES ON THE EASTERN EDGE OF THE SITE. THE RESULT IS A GENTLY SLOPING FIELD FROM 25' ABOVE GRADE, THE LEVEL OF THE HIGHWAY, TO -20' BELOW GRADE (THE SLOPE IS BETWEEN 4% AND 5%, ENOUGH TO FEEL BUT NOT ENOUGH TO DISCOURAGE A PERSON FROM WALKING IT). THE FIELD SLIPS UNDER THE BUS AND RAIL LINES UNINHIBITED TO THE SITE'S EAST SIDE NEIGHBOR(HOOD) .



SKETCH MODELS OF FIELD:
GEOMETRY, TOPOGRAPHY, INFRSTRUCTURE AND TEXTURE OF TERMINAL SITE

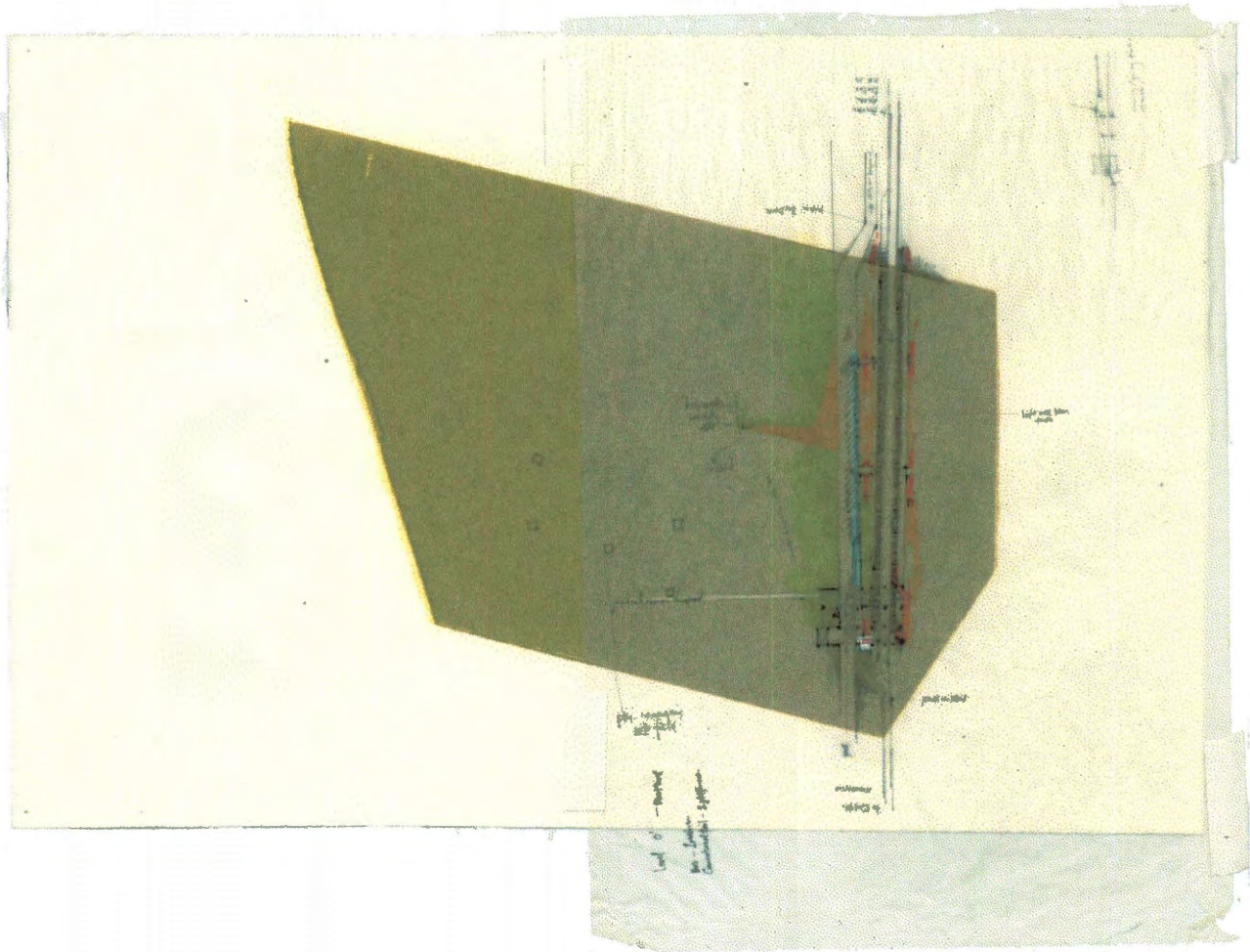


LEVEL - 20' BELOW GRADE

UNDER BUS DECK AND 2 STACKS OF RAIL
 INSIDE/OUTSIDE/COVERED/EXPOSED
 LOCAL AND VISITOR COLLISION POINT
 WALKING UPHILL
 + TERMINAL SUPPORT
 + BAGGAGE CLAIM

WAITING
 READING
 + PARKING
 + TOILETS
 LOCAL LUNCHING
 FIELD

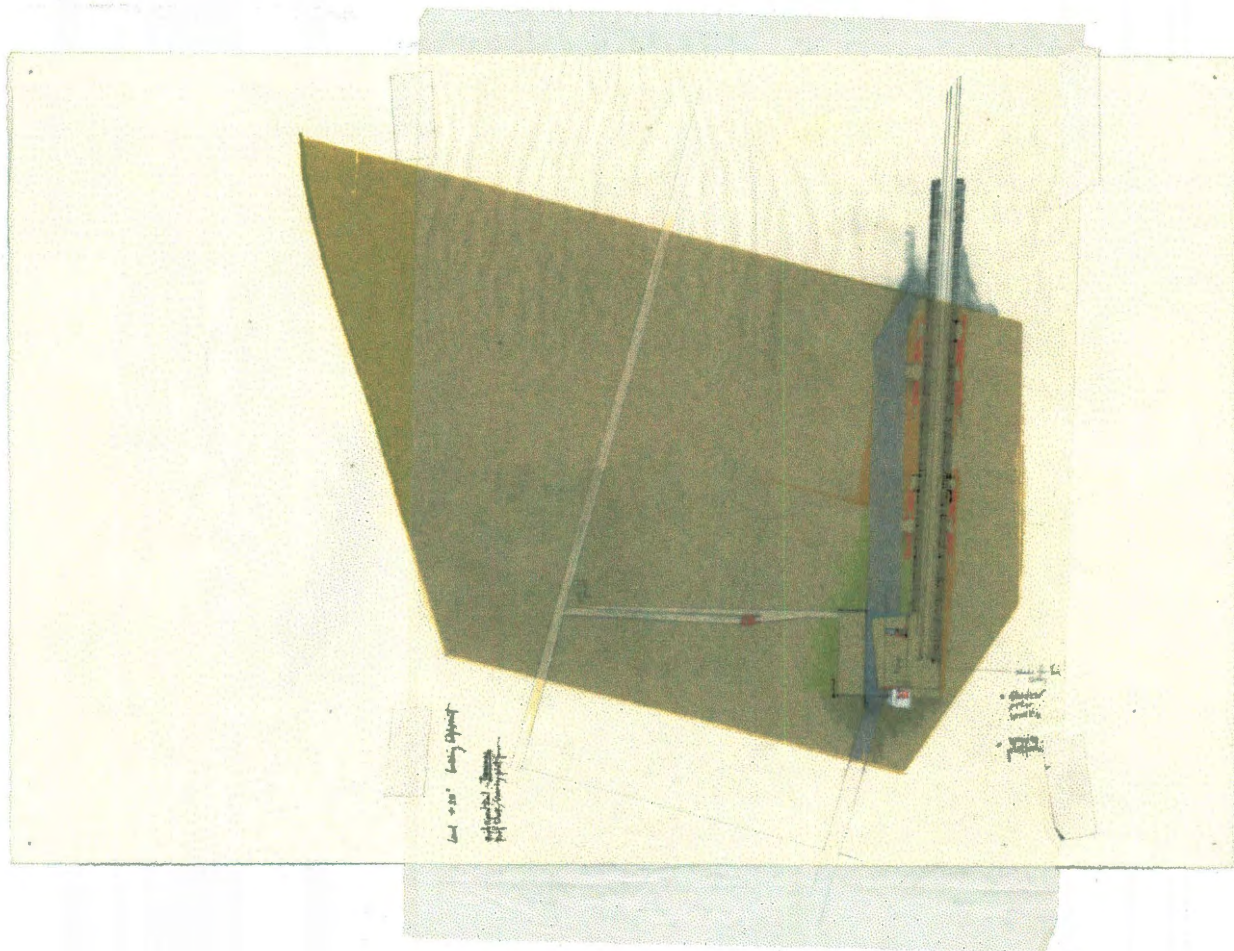
+ PARK AND RIDE
 PASSENGER PICK-UP
 + AIRLINE SHUTTLE VAN
 POST / PRE THE NEXT MODE
 SMELLING THE FIELD
 + TICKETING



LEVEL 0

+ BUS DECK, 26 GREYHOUND AND LOCAL TRANSIT BAYS
 + CONVENTIONAL RAIL PLATFORMS
 CITY SURFACE
 CLIMBING OR DESCENDING
 UNDER ONE STACK OF RAIL
 GOING SOMEWHERE

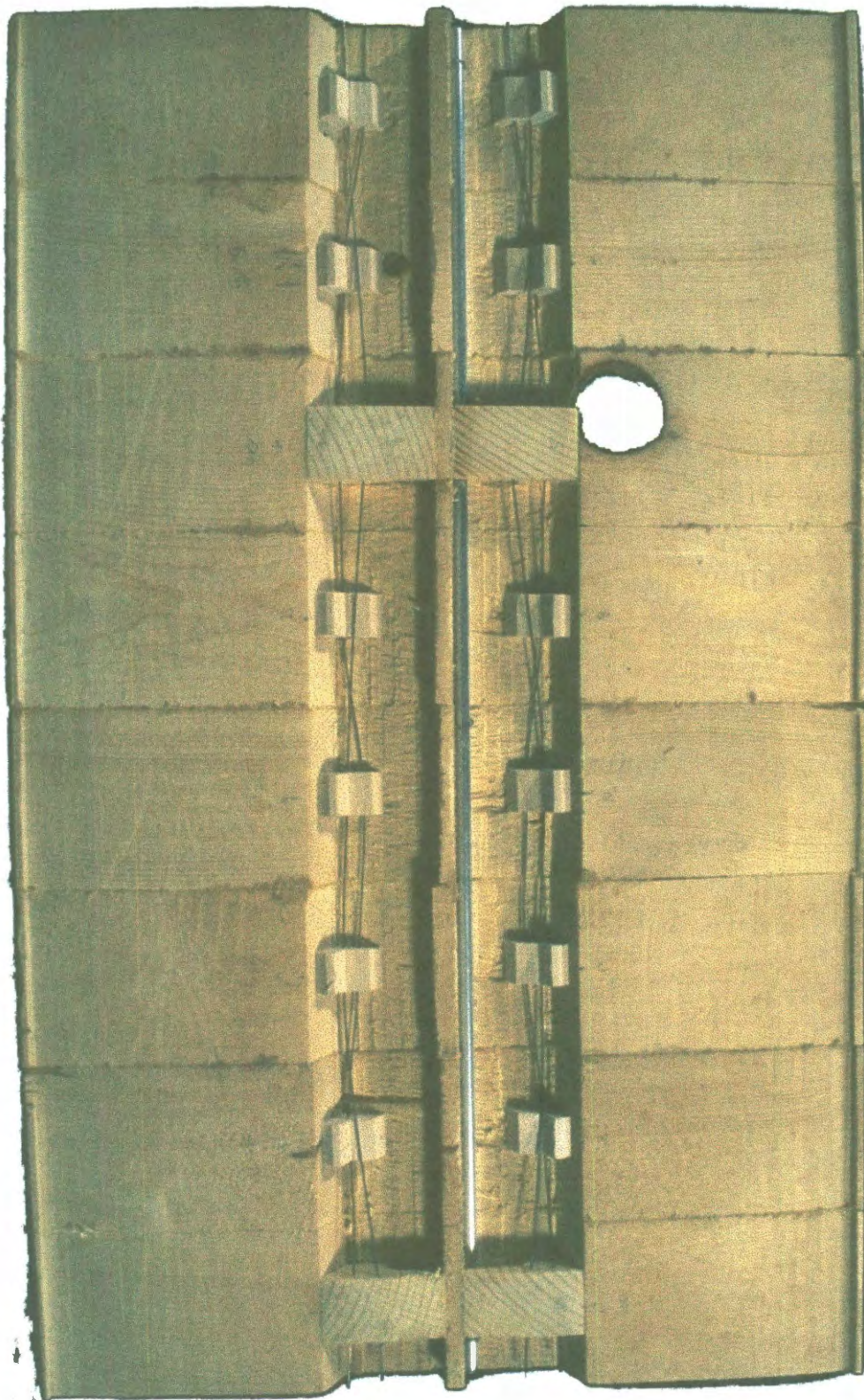
QUEUING UP
 HURRY UP
 WAIT
 + CAR POOL
 THROUGH STREETS



LEVEL + 25

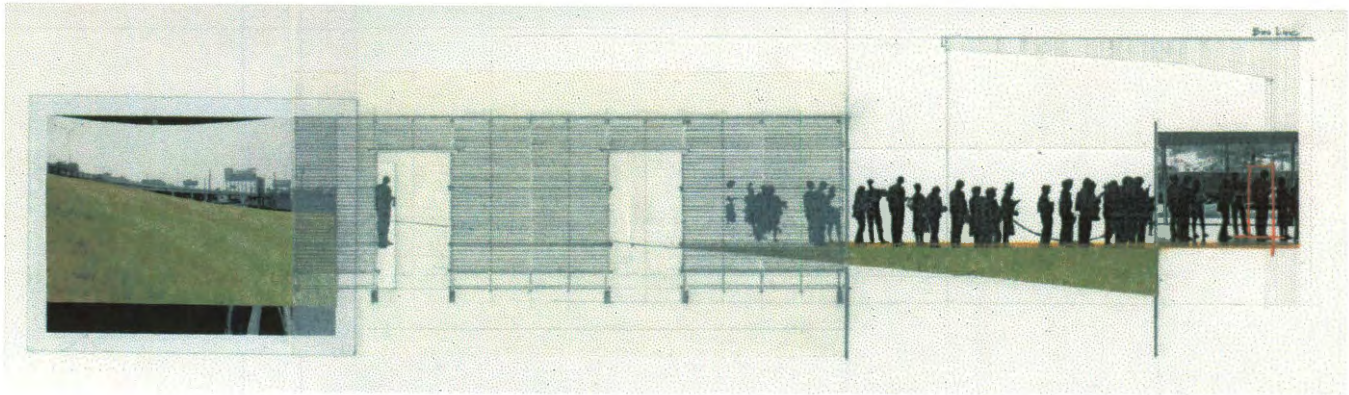
+ LOOKING DOWN ON AND ACROSS THE CITY
 + HIGH SPEED RAIL PLATFORMS
 UNDER THE SKY
 LEAVING THE CITY OR JUST ARRIVING
 ANTICIPATION
 WAITING

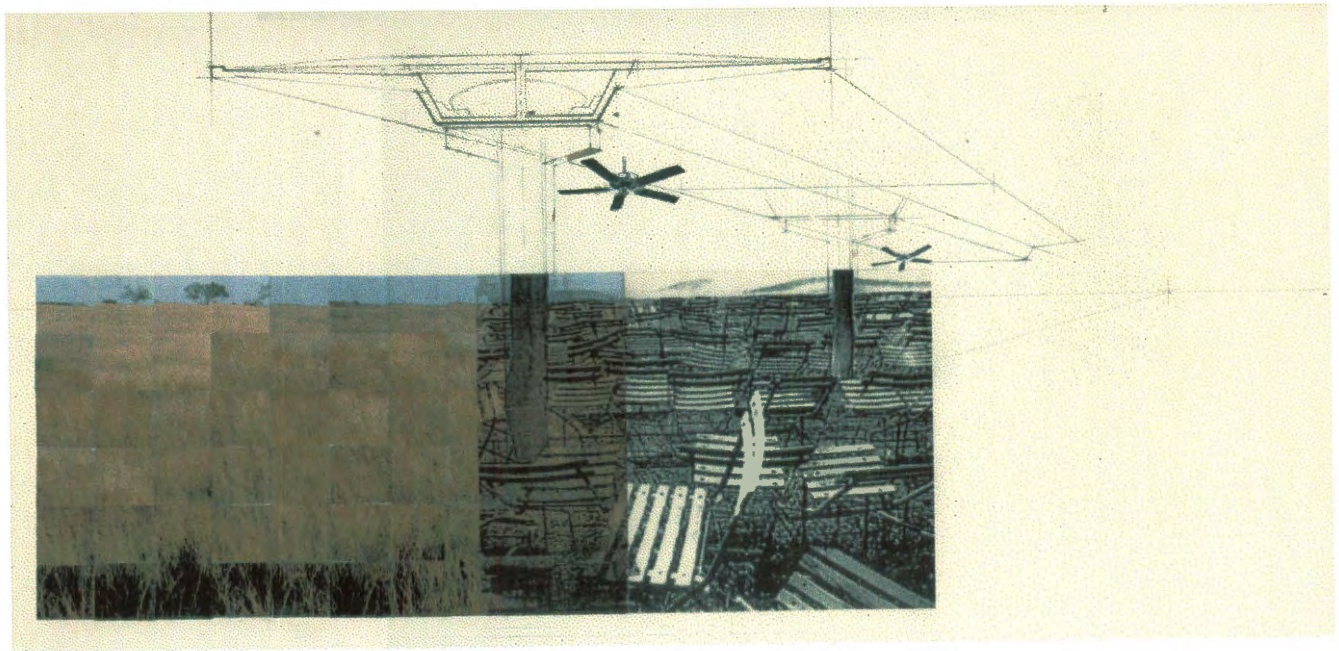
DESCENDING
 IN THE WIND
 DOWNTOWN SKYLINE
 FOREGROUND OF FIELD

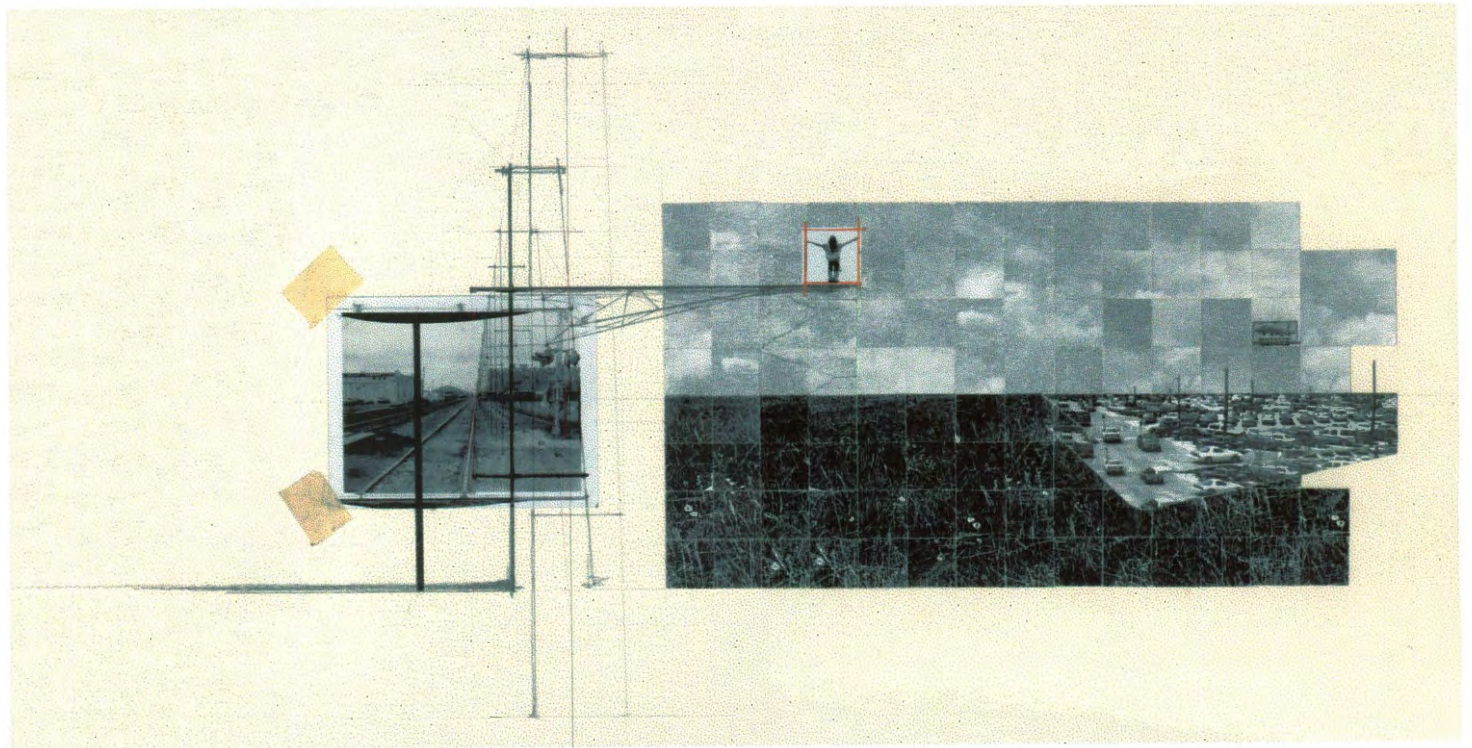


CONSTRUCTION DETAIL OF CONCRETE BUS DECK WITH BOX GIRDER EXPOSED AND WEARING SURFACE REMOVED:
ORTHOTROPIC PRECAST SEGMENTAL BOX GIRDER CONSTRUCTION WITH EXTERNAL POST-TENSIONED TENDONS









EPILOGUE

I have been called optimistic and in the same breath naive. To approach an architectural problem with an optimist's eye would seem unpopular in today's architectural climate where the reconciliation between city and architecture occurs frequently on the level of irony, a rather skeptical position to take. The power of ironic provocation is undeniable, but it feels wrong, as if the city is becoming a life-size comedy of sorts played out in the built environment. And the joke is on an unsuspecting public, the public caught yet again "unconstructed" in the contemporary city.¹

A "joke" most recently made embarrassingly clear featured a panel of star architects surrounding Peter Eisenman, in the setting of his Wexner Center at the University of Columbus in Ohio. Aired on a Public Television Broadcast of the Charlie Rose Show November 11, 1996, an audience member commented on the confusion she experienced trying to find the Wexner Center's Entrance. Eisenman's response was that he was interested in revealing to the public something new about an entrance hoping that the user would never look at an entrance in the same way.² To be fair, Eisenman was fielding a question to an ununique audience of Public Television, yet I anticipated his response to let me in on bottom line motivations for his architecture pursuits. This notion of turning architecture upside down and on its head in order to progress is perhaps useful in theory, in school, or as a design tool that tries to shake preconceived notions that we may have. Ultimately, in the built environment it leads to circulation problems and a public that can no longer enter architecture.

Architecture seems to be on the band wagon, and it should be the last to leave the public uninscribed, a sacrifice that is already occurring in politics and economics. On many levels this is a ridiculous notion and impossible because of the parts of buildings that will always reference the human body: door handles, steps, and chairs can never really stray far from function. Yet, when we briefly consider electronic access, escalators, even bus stops with no benches for waiting,



bus stop in Downtown , (Houston) USA

there are certain tactile, tangible grounds that architecture is giving up in the contemporary city.

I have to be careful at this point and not sound nostalgic for an experience between the public and architecture that may have never existed. Yet, I am looking for a balance between ideological underpinnings of the late modernism as well as US revitalization and urban renewal programs of the 1960s versus the current hopeless state of affairs described by architecture theoreticians building skepticism into their work. Not only is architecture selling off the inscribed subject to liquid infrastructures — economies of scale and global condensation — more directly, we are sacrificing material, traditional and cultural inspirations of design. I am interested in statements which call into question the contemporary meaning of architecture in our cities. How architects could suddenly feel useless in this process concerns me as a soon to be practicing architect.

Precedent and Present State

Alejandro de la Sota is said to have been interested in the public client and not individuals serving personal needs.³ Only public buildings challenged and confirmed his position and methods of architecture. The statement is inspired by the social agenda made explicit in ideological underpinnings of the modern project of which Sota is a product. It also presupposes 1960s American intentions of

revitalization and urban renewal programs. I mention this because there is inherent optimism for the city and architecture embedded in the statement, the type of optimism I mentioned earlier. Such optimism has been lost in recent years, the complexity of the city overpowering any contribution architecture can make in a city. I would hope that what drives the complexity of the city does not exclude architecture attempting to have a human, material, traditional, cultural, and contemporary spirit, but certain architects would lead me to believe otherwise...

Glenn Murcutt clearly states that he is not interested in nor is he able to build large scale works. "Domestic projects permit me to conceptualize and build many more of my ideas than is possible in a large, urban project."⁴

In *Kenneth Frampton's* definition of critical regionalism, his first point calls for a marginal practice, which he later explains as one that "favours the small rather than the large plan." His fourth point even damns the use of air-conditioning claiming that suggests a "universal civilization."⁵

Rem Koolhaas, in his article "Bigness", asserts that the size of a building alone embodies an ideological program. The first theorem to his Theory of Bigness states that beyond a certain critical mass, a big building can no longer be controlled by a single gesture, or even by any combination of architectural gestures. The fifth theorem goes as far as declaring a break between bigness and anything good in architecture. Simply, bigness always wins.⁶

If we can assume that contemporary public projects necessitate a certain scale, they are generally much bigger than private projects, privileging the smaller project is leaving the larger, public project out of the "good architecture" equation. As soon as a certain size is surpassed, authenticity⁷ in architecture is lost. In the contemporary city machine, big buildings are inevitable. Convention centers, covered sports stadiums, urban malls, high occupancy hotels, airports, ring highways are part of the infrastructure that sustains cities. What is the architectural response to this type of building?



SAN ANTONIO'S ALAMODOME: A MULTIPURPOSE FACILITY

The big and dumb, climate controlled box characterizes this type. They typically seal off everything outside. Houston is full of these buildings, the result of its mostly inhospitable climate and that it is a post-air-conditioned city (meaning that most of the city growth occurred after the invention of air-conditioning). Technology and mechanical engineering have internalized Houston. The places within, sometimes atmospheric in size, are able to shut out and ignore outside forces such as climate which are traditionally critical in design. Vernacular materials are deemed useless, even senseless with the new technologies available for large scale construction, their meaning reduced to mere symbol. Certainly there are exceptional public projects that get built, exceptional in the sense that they offer access to orders of the city outside the buildings site, but these seem so infrequent I would call them exceptions rather than examples. The museum program seems to defy the contemporary patterns of mediocrity I've outlined above, but these are usually monuments of monumental cost to the investor and stand outside the constraints of time and budget. It is easier and more economical to build the 'dumb' box. Museums as isolated incidents are "last ditch hopes of contemporary architecture at its best."⁸

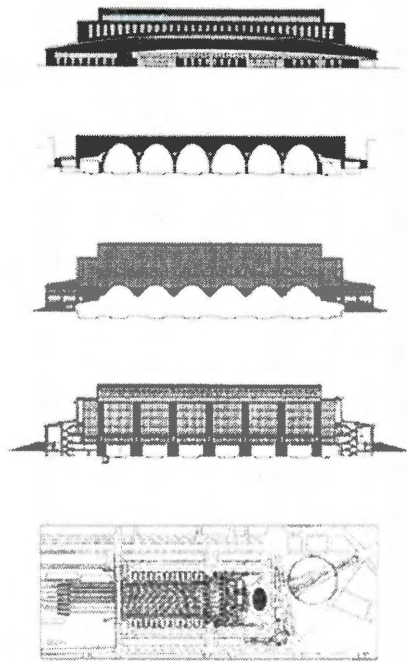
Case Study

My project in the city of San Antonio embraces the zone of conflict described above. I am working on a project for the city of San Antonio. It is a public project, a transportation terminal located in the downtown area of the city. It is an example of Government taking on an active role in the business environment which is justified in order to promote the city and maintain its economic and political vitality on a global scale. Despite the global significance, the program is simply the convergence of 1. public and private modes of transport, 2. Local and Global users, and 3. the most traditional with the most universal of fabrics.

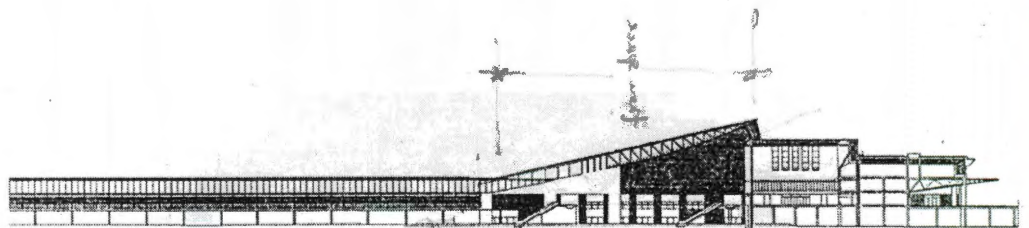
Politically it creates a gateway between the United States and Mexico as a result of the North American Free Trade Agreement and it requires an incredible amount of public/private coordination. In a similar way, although across an ocean, Cruz and Ortiz faced the same issues in building the Santa Justa Railway Station for Seville built during the Expo '92.

What strikes me most about the Seville Station is that it is the least self-glorifying project to come out of Expo '92 and it has received the most consistent praise. I call it an appropriate canon. The Santa Justa Station is a humble answer to the political significance of a high speed rail extension to Southern Spain as well as a direct Seville/Madrid connection, what Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzales called a political maneuver to achieve a North and South balance in Spain. On a local level, the building is an extension of the existing urban fabric in the middle of medieval Seville that does not exaggerate program and location within the city. Cruz and Ortiz prove that serious architecture is realistic, popular, appropriate and still possible in contemporary Spain. Critics refer to their buildings as contributions to the city which sustains the optimism found in earlier movements of architecture.

Santa Justa Station sets urban, social, and spatial standards. The site was chosen for two reasons, to relocate the existing rail located on the river's edge, thus freeing up potentially important river frontage for development and to fill in a gap in the medieval middle of the city on the site of an old, abandoned food market. Conscious of the role the station plays in the context of the city, Cruz and Ortiz set part of the program inside a proposed built square which encloses the station and continues the fabric of the existing street. This prevents the station from overexposure leading to an unnecessary disruption of the surrounding neighborhood. The use of a limited palette of materials and natural light helps blend the massive building into the surrounding blocks. Materials and light also help in the simple organization of the building. The sequence of spaces from entrance to exit is linearly choreographed by a gradual accent or decent (depending on if your coming or going) which is directionally understood by a progression of unique spaces defined by material, light, and proportional differences.



SECTION CUTS THROUGH BUILDING FROM ENTRANCE TO PLATFORMS AND PLAN



LONGITUDINAL SECTION

The design is striking when compared to high-tech solutions common among recent projects similar in program. Santa Justa's lessons are better matched with Moneo's Atocha Station in Madrid rather than Koolhaas at Lille, not because it seems more traditional, but because it sets out to meet the needs of an urban condition and architectural solution, rather than giving an architectural response to an urban condition.

Application ¹⁰

My program and site positions me quite clearly with the pessimists of architectural theory, but that has not been my approach, having the design stand for some kind of critique of the contemporary city and lost subjectivity within the world that current practices perpetuate, i.e. the unconstructed subject or individual which has no sense of or is powerless within the political, economic machines that are what drives production. Even if we do not understand what is effecting us, why this means we cannot have beautiful places in which to deal with our confusion, I cannot figure. I would rather focus on the incidents that make a place a good one. I am not being nostalgic for traditional city relationships which maybe never existed, nor am I confirming architecture's inability to delay the daily routines of city machines at work. I hope this is where my premise becomes clearer and clearer and where I take the lessons of Santa Justa seriously.

Smoothing the connection between building, its immediate context and the city seems appropriate, but impossible given the political nature of the program, the industrial quality of the site, and actual size requirements of consolidating all modes of transportation into a single point. Santa Justa strikes me as a perfectly smooth project, the way it relates to its context, subverts its political significance, and integrates infrastructure's order with architectural order. It is especially smooth relative to Madrid's Atocha Station or San Antonio's Alamodome (the Alamodome pictured earlier on page 7 and located within a 3 minute walking distance of my terminal site). Both examples are monuments which interrupt the flow of people and fabric of the city. To me, it is the smoothing that makes the Santa Justa project appropriate, the role of the architect becoming an agent of *provisional intervention* rather than *form-giver*.



SAN ANTONIO TERMINAL SITE PHOTOGRAPH, TYPICAL

The terminal site is between a major highway and existing railroad tracks on an industrial swath of land between the downtown and a residential neighborhood. The existing fabric of this industrial swath of land is a complete mess of old railroad industrial buildings and infrastructures which have been abandoned or are used for storage. Weeds and vines are the only activity changing the place. *Typical condition of San Antonio terminal site* I call the area a blooming ruin, something that is common in between the sprawl of the contemporary city. Areas which are either abandoned, passed over or demolished fall into our these peripheral zones we never experience, but which are often central: demolition sites, catastrophe leftovers, industrial districts, rail corridors, between commercial and residential, downtown and suburbia, or subdivision and subdivision. Examples of cycles of productivity uprooting, relocating and moving on leaves a natural cycle to reclaim territory. Within sprawl, these huge fields of neglect expose a major component and opportunity in the landscape of the city, a fabric of green weeds and grass.

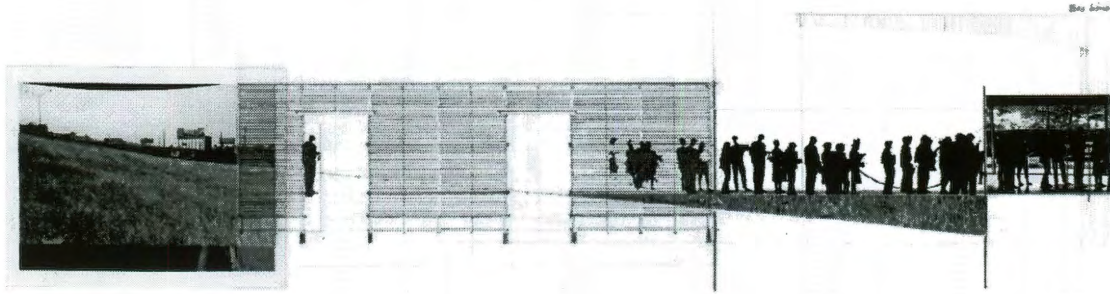
What is interesting about the parking lots, switching yards, and large industrial sheds on the San Antonio site in particular, is the existing fabric. The sheds are too large and oddly proportioned to say that they are objects in a field, and not dense enough to call the area full of holes. The figure ground relationship is neither a field with objects, or dense object with holes, but somewhere strangely in-between. Coupled with nature reclaiming this once industrially active area and the will of the site to return to a landscape, there is a curious scalar reciprocity that blurs the distinction between the artificial and the natural. This condition relates to the paradox of the well known optical phenomenon of Gestalt psychology. Although presented simultaneously, it is not possible to register both the vase and kissing profiles simultaneously.



The fusion of the two relates to blurring the transitions between complete exposure and enclosure, inside and outside, natural and artificial, experiences I found interesting to prolong.

The design of the San Antonio terminal is an attempt to combine the issue of the expanding (and expandable) landscape of the site and city with the requirements of the terminal's infrastructure. This new urban ground, a fourteen field of wild grass sloped and excavated gradually between the highway and rail becomes the terminal's access to the city. It is from within this field or void that we can also see the city. To introduce a transportation terminal on the downtown's edge in a

fourteen acre field is an attempts to access the city visually, materially, regionally, experientially, and culturally in the same way Santa Justa organizes its longitudinal section. The various modes of travel pass through the site efficiently and the design of the facility happens between the infrastructure pieces, the field and the experience. The terminal tries to capture conditions where the roles of infrastructure, architecture, and nature are shared.



A SECTION THROUGH SAN ANTONIO SITE FROM HIGHWAY TO RAILROAD TRACKS

ENDNOTES:

¹ The unconstructed subject is described in Albert Pope's article "The Unconstructed Subject in the Contemporary City." Pope describes a city where the individual is no longer integral to the city's construction, "where we are literally no longer constituted as subjects in the form and space of the city. The simultaneous collapse of public space and monumental construction has left it impossible to negotiate the economic, political and cultural identities which have historically constituted civil society....In effect, while the market has thrived, the substance of a city that is recognizably human has been surrendered."

² I am relying on architectural publications to grasp the debate that surrounds his work, especially Diane Ghirardo's article, "Two Institutions for the Art" in the book edited by her, *Out of Site*, Bay Press, Seattle, 1991.

³ Louis Fernandez-Galiano, "Spanish Architecture 1900-1995: Modernity and Tradition," The Cullinan Chair Lectures, Rice University School of Architecture, Houston, September 11, 1996.

⁴ E.M. Farrelly, *Three Houses: Glenn Mercurt*, Phaidon Press Ltd., London, 1993.

⁵ Kenneth Frampton, "Critical Regionalism: Modern Architecture and Cultural Identity," *Modern Architecture, A Critical History*, Thames and Hudson Ltd., London, 1980.

⁶ Rem Koolhaas, "Bigness," SMLXL, Monacelli Press, 1995.

⁷ I use the word authenticity here in the same way Bernard Rudofsky uses it while describing the lessons of primitive architecture in his 1960s exhibition and book, *Architecture Without Architects*; the break between authenticity and architecture occurring in any contemporary interpretation of vernacular and traditional materials. He identifies beautiful forms tied to the simplest and purest of inspirations in nonpedigreed architecture; yet he denies the authenticity of contemporary interpretations of vernacular by architects using modern materials. Why his text is frustrating is that he denies the authenticity of sincere attempts to employ tradition traditionally. He is suggesting that the use of traditional materials, for example, would be symbolic rather than actual, the vernacular reduced to a symbol rather than the thing itself. We can add Rudofsky to the list of nay sayers above. But more than representation, contemporary interpretations of the vernacular materials and typologies offer access to the order of a city.

⁸ Seminar discussion moderated by Richard Ingersoll, "Museality," Late 20th Century Architecture, Rice University School of Architecture, March 12, 1996.

⁹ *Domus*, June 1992, no.70, pp. 90-99.

¹⁰ Translating the lessons of Santa Justa Station to a San Antonio terminal seems impossible given the different political climates and cultural histories of Spain and the United States. Yet, it would seem just as impossible to translate projects within the United States. For example, the transportation patterns in a southwestern Texas city versus those that exist in the northeast in cities such as DC, New York, or Boston are completely different. In the northeast, political barriers between cities occur much more frequently, the distances between businesses and individuals much shorter and traversed easier. Given the specific nature of any solution is caution enough for finding ways to analyze and reinterpret what historical precedents have to offer rather than reinventing the wheel every time I go to design at my desk. Inherent in the Santa Justa case study described above focuses on issues that I found appropriate to understand relative to San Antonio's terminal.

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